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Good evening Senator Harp and Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Catherine Battista and I am the President of the CT Family Resource Center Alliance and Director of 2 Family Resource Centers in Meriden. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. The CT Family Resource Alliance represents 62 sites throughout Connecticut. In December 1988, the CT State Legislature passed legislation allocating funding for the establishment and coordination of 3 demonstration FRCs. CT was the first state to initiate, fund, and demonstrate the feasibility of FRCs directly linked to the local public school system. Based on the School of the 21st Century concept as developed by Dr. Edward Zigler, Director of the Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy at Yale, the Family Resource Center concept envisions comprehensive, integrated, community-based systems of family support and child development services linked to public schools or located in public school buildings offered to families **regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status**. Provide a single point of entry to programs and services and link schools, families and communities. Presently there are 1300 school-based sites across the nation with 21C programs referred to as FRCs in Kentucky and CT.

Dr. Zigler is a true visionary. He understood the importance of prevention.

Prevention, as we all know, is key to the success of a child. FRCs have been experts at prevention and intervention since 1988. Our mission is to prevent an array of childhood and adolescent problems by strengthening effective family management practices and establishing a continuum of childcare and support services for the optimal development of the child beginning at birth.

Family Resource Center is a misnomer since we do not simply provide information: we provide direct services to families with children birth and up. We are all aware that there is a student achievement gap: I refer to it as a **family achievement gap**. As we strengthen the family, we strengthen the child and improve outcomes for success in school and in life.

We offer childcare, parenting programs, family literacy initiatives, adult education, home visitation and child development screening with referrals to the CT Birth-3 system, home childcare provider support, school readiness support – anything that helps a family, we do. And if we can't help them we will find someone who can.

We do not duplicate services – we do, however, put it all together and connect the dots. We are culturally sensitive and intergenerational in our approach. **And the best part is we customize what we do according to the need of the individual school in an individual town. And the even better part is that we have the ability to leverage dollars to support schools so that they can better meet the instructional needs of the students.**